Chapter II

MAN AND WORLD

771 Bang Chan had for years heard preaching from Buddhist scriptures. Co-existing with these teachings were Hindu elements referring to Brahma, Shiva, and others. People also believed in an animistic lore concerning frightening [192] ghosts and spirits (phī), protecting deities (thewadā), maternal goddesses, princely spirit-lords, and other supernatural guardians of a more or less benevolent nature. To these beliefs were added special bodies of knowledge, such as sacred literature from India and traditions of astrology from both China[8] and India. Other elements might be traced to Muslim influence, just as Muslims shared some of the foregoing references with their Buddhist neighbors. Bang Chan shaped its views of nature and man from all these sources. However, we shall not try in what follows to specify the sources of its beliefs.

826 774 184 192 The Human Body

The body of flesh, blood, bones, and other materials, harbored the noncorporeal aspects, in particular a person's merit store (kam; Skr: karma) and his several souls, viz., the khwan, the winyan, and the four chetthaphūt (cf. J.R. Hanks, 1958). Views of the human body formed no unitary system, but were as varied as their origins. Thus, sometimes villagers distinguished the material from the non-material: "a human being is composed of two aspects: rūp (body) and arūp (non-body)." Sometimes learned persons referred to the Hindu-Buddhist concept of 32 parts of the body, one of which, the winyān-soul, was the "organizer" of the others.

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8. No trace was discovered of the Chinese concept of Yin as female, dark, cold, and evil, etc., and Yang as its opposite.

[115] 9. Ming (Mc.F. 880) was once given as a term for "soul" by a Muslim informant, but without further information.

826 [964] [963] [954] [952] [845]

As to the gross structure of the body, some persons learned about the skeleton when, in preparing corpses for cremation, the undertaker stripped the decaying flesh from the bones, usually in the presence of relatives and spectators of all ages. Occasional autopsies because of suspected sorcery, and surgical removal of a fetus from a deceased mother by caesarian section led to some knowledge of organs and blood vessels. Male and female masseurs of considerable competence were trained in the Chinese neuro-muscular system. A system of "origins," e.g. that the elbow-origin was in the arm pit, and the chest originated at the spine, might relate to the Chinese concept of linkage points on the body, in particular, acupuncture. In Bang Chan's popular conceptualization, the protecting skin which enclosed the body was thin at the top of the head and especially so at the stomach area. An old image also persisted that the body cavity itself was a relatively undivided space extending from neck to pelvis. Inside the cavity, food dropped from the top, faeces packed down at the bottom. Through the body curculated slowly the blood; several kinds of water (nām) (McF. 453) e.g., the nām khraam (refuse-water) (ibid. 453) in the abdomen; and several winds (lom) (ibid. 728) e.g., the pushing lom bêng (ibid. 487), and the pulling lom chawat (ibid. 287). The small hair-whorls noted on the head, hip, or shoulder were construed as minor vortices of these currents, or as souls (khwan).

827 [192]

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Foremost in people's minds were the elemental constituents of the body. The human body, along with every animal, plant, or mineral in the world, was made up of 4 elements (thāt): earth, fire, water, and wind (air).[10] This ancient four-fold view, also familiar to the Greeks, had mixed in Bang Chan with the traditional five-element Chinese system (metal, earth, fire, water, wood) because gold, iron, and wood were also spoken of as constitutional elements, and there may have been others. Some persons said that the proportions of the 4 major elements were the same for everyone; others, that they varied for different temperaments, which were also affected by the presence or absence of elements other than the basic 4.

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10. "The body, comprising about a bushel of powdery earth-element, is held together by half a bushel of juicy water-element, and propped up by the windy-element. The fiery element digests what is eaten or drunk and preserves the body". (Visuddhi-Magga. [Warren.157-158]).

The Role of the หมอ

756 844 A หมอ never delivered the baby and never even touched a woman in labor, for this was not part of his specialty. If labor were slow, or weakness were setting in, he came to give a decoction to raise the fire element within the body, speed up the winds and so strengthen the contractions. He also gave holy water for general strength and to clear out, if such there were, any obstructing spirit or magical disease object like khun. Because of his experience, though, he might stand beside the midwife or other woman instructing; for instance, "Pull now!" "Watch out for the eyes!" His advice was more often sought after childbirth if fever or swollen body were in evidence, for these were the results of "inadequate outflow of blood and fishy-water." Because they were called in case of debility, the หมอ were the ones who suggested when it was advisable to send a parturient to the Minburi Health Center.

756 84 No priest-หมอ was ever called for childbirth because of the contact with a woman's genital area, though they were consulted on menstrual and pre-natal irregularities.

759 ## The Specialty of the Midwife

Midwives were called หมอ ตำแย (doctor-expert-in-occultism; pounding, as in a mortar [McF. 365] crouching, [McF. 682]). There were 4 or 6 women, both Buddhist and Muslim, and 2 or 3 Buddhist men, who had delivered 100 or so babies apiece. They ranged in age from 50 to 70. Dozens of women had delivered babies one or more times but were not accorded the title of midwife.

759 845 The foundation of their specialty was a greater than usual manual skill, developed over long experience. "We have only our hands," said one woman. The more expert could handle certain mal-positions, and did not hesitate, but only with permission, to put the hand into the vagina to turn the baby or "unstop the blood." They were better judges of the progress of labor, whether normal or slow, and of the symptoms of debility. They were more likely to keep calm in the face of extreme suffering where the parturient's relatives, over-eager in their desire to help, sometimes inflicted

262 understood that her merit helped her not to be hungry. Once
888 she asked an eminent layman about eating at night. He said, "If you are not hungry, do not eat. If you feel hungry, it is better to eat. If someone invites you to eat, it is sinful to refuse."

261 Even young adults had a strong revulsion against gluttony. One of the symptoms of a man who went mad and had to be committed to an institution was that "he ate too much." A woman was despised because "she ate in secret. She stole eggs from her husband, sold them in the market, and then spent the cash on food which she ate there, instead of bringing it home." Definitions of a glutton were, "A 'with-rice' eater," or simply as "one who eats alone." These comments highlight the counsels of eating in moderation and in company. On the other hand, a full stomach was valued for "home is where one eats one's fill."

262 At maturity, when farm and other tasks were shared as
562 equals, men and women ate almost the same food. The old pros-
262 cription against animal food for women was somewhat relaxed,
220 but not entirely. To sustain farmers during the seasons of hard work, however, extra quantities of rice and rice alone, were considered essential. "With-rice" was pleasant but not so necessary. Any shift away from a diet of rice as ordinarily cooked in Bang Chan was construed as a shift either in occupation or in health. For example an eminent citizen who gave
[95] up farming took to eating (3)khaaw (3)tom often. This soupy rice, a staple dish for infant feeding, had interesting socio-economic connotations. It was served as a light lunch to cooperative farm-workers to be followed at the day's end by a real meal. It was also "delicate" food, suitable for the sick, for city-people, for those who did not toil with their hands and backs. Consequently, when this man ate this "delicate food" more often, he was consciously or unconsciously serving notice on the community that he was not going to do farm work any more, for (3)khaaw (3)tom could not possibly have sustained a farmer's strength. Caustic villagers hinted that he was putting on airs.

262 Among conditions in which some change from the usual
843 diet was found were pregnancy, post parturition and lactation.
846 Relatively few foods were generally considered to be tabooed under any of these conditions, but many women preferred to limit intake to "safe" foods if there were any possibility that certain foods might cause harm.

[124] Information was obtained from 42 mothers about the food they ate during the post-partum rest period. Two said they ate as usual, but for the remainder, the diet was considerably

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[192] 1. Literally "beautiful rice." For method of cooking, see p. 33.

Some vegetables, boiled or raw, are also included, but in small quantities in spite of abundant supply." 262

Note that not only has rice been considered much more important as food than "with-rice"[1], but that the diet was more limited for children and young women than for men. The Food and Drug Division of the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand has been trying to encourage people to eat more "with-rice" and less rice. The few comments we heard in relation to rice versus "with-rice" illustrate both the old and the new ideas. One informant stated that only rice can make children fat and that the "hot tasting" foods help them to eat more rice. Another commented that rice makes children strong, and "with-rice" makes them weak. Another, a mother of seven children, said that if babies were given too much "with-rice" they would be potbellied. The more modern view was expressed by an informant who said that a certain child ate only rice with fish and was weak. He refused vegetables and banana. One affluent farmer, an elderly man whose orphaned grandchild was being raised on cow's milk[2], expressed the opinion that the ancient belief was based on thrift. He said that thrifty people did not want to spend much on a baby, therefore, they said that if a child ate too much "with-rice" he would be potbellied but thin in the upper part of the body and that eating eggs would cause dental caries. This grandfather said that he believed the truth to be just the opposite, but that good things were expensive. As an illustration of the idea that thrift was the basis of restriction of "with-rice", one young mother said that an egg was regarded as equivalent to one (1)plaa (1)thuu (a fish), and was enough for two persons. Sometimes one egg would serve an entire family. She said that a child would be punished if he ate a whole egg at a meal.

Summary of Infant Feeding Practices in Bang Chan with Some Suggestions for Improvement.

To sum up the information obtained on baby feeding in Bang Chan, breast feeding was the rule. Some babies were nursed for two years or longer although about two-thirds of those we observed through the weaning period had been weaned by 18 or 19 months of age. Aside from honey which was given with medicine or hot water to newborn babies for a few days only, crushed banana of the (4)nam-(4)wa variety was usually the earliest dietary supplement. By 3 months of age about half the infants were being given banana, sometimes crushed with rice. Between 853 [862]

1. In Thai the general term meaning "to eat" is translated literally "to eat rice." Food items are divided into two classes: rice and "with-rice." [892]

2. See Footnote, page 25.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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fictive terms is of course sometimes prompted by nothing more than the desire to be polite, but equally often it symbolizes genuine feelings of affection and obligation not too different from what the terms imply when they are used in their original kinship context. Bang Chaners have a wonderfully convenient term, *phyan-yaad*, a compound meaning literally "family friends," which is used to refer both to friends to whom ego feels so close that he considers them members of his family and to individuals whom he considers his friends *because* they are members of his family. The particular persons to whom this term, as well as those noted above, is applied vary widely from informant to informant (expectedly so because they are non-institutionalized terms). However, the point to be emphasized is that for all villagers kinship provides a basic referential mechanism for expressing the degree of psychological affiliation that they feel toward other human beings.

An *awareness* of degrees of psychological affiliation and obligation and of the modes for expressing such sentiments are very much a part of village life. For with the exception of the five institutions mentioned above, most Bang Chaners, as I have noted elsewhere (Sharp *et al.* 1956: 241), are really not obliged—and do not feel obliged—to be beholden to anyone but themselves. In a very real sense, the village is comprised of 1,771 individualists whose major goals in life are to obtain sufficient land to support themselves, their growing children, and their religion, free from physical insecurities and unencumbered by entangling social obligations. When they enter into relationships with other people they do so with an awareness that they are always acting of their own free will.

Despite the conventions of ethnographic reporting, it is difficult to delimit the precise nature of the nuclear family in Bang Chan. The nuclear family clearly is the ideal for all villagers, but because Bang Chaners are just as responsive to convenience as they are to custom, there is considerable variation regarding this ideal. In his study of the economy of the village, Janlekha (1955) found it necessary to distinguish five different kinds of functioning, mutually exclusive household units in Bang Chan: the typical nuclear family (59.4 percent of all households); a limited extended family, consisting of a man, wife, either or both their sets of parents, and unmarried children (8.1 percent); an extended family, consisting of the limited extended family plus married children, the latters' children, and any collateral relatives of any generation (26.8 percent); a one-person family (5.4 percent); and the ecclesiastical "family," consisting of the order of Buddhist monks, the only truly corporate group in the village (0.3 percent). (These variations of the nuclear family, all localized groups, should of course not be confused with what I, following Sharp [1957], have been calling the kindred, with what Kaufman [1960] refers to as spatially and

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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various kinds of ants living in Thailand and the United States. (Such are the topics that interest villagers.) The villagers wanted to know the English names for small red ants, normal black ones, and the large, rusty colored variety that are indigenous to the tropics. I named the first two with no difficulty. For the third, I said simply, "a giant ant." The assistant, turning to one of the informants, first gave the literal Thai equivalent of "giant," and then, as if this were the funniest thing he had heard that week, began to repeat, "giant, gi-ant, gi-ant." In a few seconds, they were all bursting with laughter.

Different, yet part of the same psychological constellation, is the whole complex of behaviors associated with the term, *sanug*. *Sanug* is usually translated into English simply as "fun." However, this translation conveys little of the motivational significance of the term. Essentially, *sanug* is a quality inherent in all situations which are not only fun but also emotionally worthwhile. In fact, these two states are often thought of as reciprocals of one another. An activity that is novel, diverting, or that can be done comfortably, is *sanug dii* (good fun); one that is tedious, overdemanding, that lacks the opportunity for frivolity, is not *sanug* and should be avoided. Harvesting rice in coöperative work groups, attending a ceremonial, participating in an election (see Phillips 1958: 45–46), or even taking something as outlandish as a Sentence Completion Test are all *sanug*. (The unifying elements of these diverse activities are either their novelty or the fact that they involve the presence of relatively large numbers of people but require no genuine interchange with them.) On the other hand, going into the army or working for a demanding superior are not *sanug*.

The importance of *sanug* is that it provides the villagers with a standard of value, a measure of how much they wish to commit themselves to a particular activity. The role of this standard should not be underestimated. Villagers who have taken a job in the city, often involving a time-bound daily routine or continuous, sustained attention to a task (work in a small factory, for example) frequently return to the village explaining that they quit "because it wasn't *sanug*. How can you work on a job if there is never any time for fun?" Foreign employers, with their greater concern for the job than with the person who does it and with their annoying tendency to be *cuu cii* (compulsive, fussy, exacting) are a particular target for this indictment, although this is usually based on hearsay rather than personal experience. On the other hand, villagers will often take on free of charge a major job (for example, helping a neighbor build a house) precisely because it is *sanug*. Although there are other considerations operating here—creating or repaying a personal obligation, doing a *bunkhun* ("a goodness") for a neighbor—the "sanug-ful" aspects of the task are always

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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V

Analysis: The SCT's Exploration of Thai Personality[1]

Attitudes Toward Authority

The first area to be dealt with is in a sense the easiest. Thai attitudes toward authority represent what is perhaps the most explicitly expressed and highly ramified area of their social psychological life. The notion of authority—a sense of superordination and subordination—is an intrinsic part of their linguistic structure, it being impossible to address or refer to a person without indicating his social status relative to the self; two-week-old infants are taught to *waj*, or offer the gesture of obeisance to superiors; during elections, villagers say that they are going to vote for the prime minister because "he is our Master. He has been very good and kind to us. He is like our father, and we are like his children"; the entire structure of the family is predicated on a system of superordination and subordination, even to the extent of considering a twin born a few minutes ahead of his sibling the latter's social superior. Examples expressive of this emphasis in the workaday life of the villagers could be cited endlessly.

What is impressive in the data to follow is not only the near unanimity of villagers in responding positively to what are essentially neutral authority situations, but the tendency on the part of a large number to respond positively to the authority situation even when the authority figure is avowedly wrong. Many of their responses also make quite explicit the underlying ethical justifications for the authority system.

The first item, *"When the phuujinjaj told him to do it, he . . . ,"* is a

[1] Words and phrases appearing in parentheses in the responses on the following pages are for purposes of clarification. The few Thai words appearing in the responses are either "complex concepts" or "difficult to translate" terms, and have been retained mainly for those readers familiar with Thai. At the top of the table, the English language item that was originally prepared for the villagers appears first; it is followed by the best English translation of the actual Thai item given to informants, including the Thai pronouns that were used. Intra-sample differences (age, sex, religion, economic position), where important, are indicated in the text, not the tables.

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*125 simple statement of a common experience. A *phuujiŋjaj* generally means a
• 192 "big person" or "big man," although in many contexts it has the same connotations as the American slang term, "big shot." (Occasionally when I used the term with Bangkokians I was laughingly told that it was not a "nice" word; however, Bang Chaners used it and responded to it in an entirely matter-of-fact way.) As it appeared in the SCT interviews, the item was clearly an abstract phrasing of a generic kind of authority situation, and could have referred to any individual the informant deemed to be a *phuujiŋjaj*.

TABLE 1

*125 *When the* phuujiŋjaj *told him to do it, he . . .*
*128 *When the* phuujiŋjaj *tells* raw *to work,* raw . . .

DIRECT, POSITIVE RESPONSE:	86%	had to do it. had to do it well, to be worthy of the *phuujiŋjaj*'s trust. had to hurry and do it. ought to do it *riab-rɔɔj* (in the neatest way). did as he was ordered. did it in accordance with the *phuujiŋjaj*'s wishes. did what he had been told to do. had to do it, so he would get credit (praise and goodness for doing it).
CONDITIONAL (PROPRIETY):	7%	ought to do only work which is proper work. If the work were not proper, he would avoid doing it.
CONDITIONAL (ABILITY):	5%	if we cannot do it, tell him we cannot. If we can do it, do it.
"RECONCILIATION":	—	if he knew the order was right, he was glad to carry it out; if it was a wrong order, according to the regulations, but if it was necessary, he had to carry it out. And when he had an opportunity, he would point out what was wrong with the order.

*125 Examination of the responses indicates a single, overwhelming disposi-
*128 tion on the part of villagers to accept and act upon the superior's authority.
*156 Four informants condition their response on the necessity, propriety, or reasonableness of the superior's order, but even in these cases the initial tendency is to respond positively; three others condition their response on their own capacity to fulfill the authority's expectations; and one villager does not reply. But all others, 86 percent, respond directly and positively to the authority demands made upon them.

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152 losing their *khwaam*, as it were—if they release their anger. This is the fear of "letting go" and of regressing to a primitive psychological state. Every impulse of an adult villager is to fight this tendency. Second, by controlling their aggressions, they are not imposing their own problems on others and are maintaining the attitudes of "respect" and tolerance—as well as emotional indifference—that are otherwise so important to them. This consideration obviously does not account for the absence of aggression; it simply points up the fact that the aggression that does exist is dealt with internally, rather than socially. Finally, their aggression control seems to be based upon fear of reprisal. Although in a few instances this may be a realistic fear, it is principally a straightforward projection: they know only too well how painful the reprisals would be of people who hold the feelings of hostility that they themselves hold. This consideration is not inconsistent with my earlier remarks on the difficulty villagers have in investing hostility in others. Rather, it follows directly: the villagers' difficulty is not based upon lack of hostility, but upon the lack of social relationships which are sufficiently meaningful to merit that hostility. Rather than work out their aggressions behaviorally—in and with other human beings—they work them out in the isolation of their own inner psychodynamics.

*125 *128 152 *156 I have gone into considerable detail here because "aggression" is the one area of the villagers' lives where the meaning of behavior is not at all apparent from its manifestations. Without such background material, the following SCT results would probably also have little significance.

The first item, *"He most often gets angry when . . . ,"* reveals some of those patterns with unexpected clarity. Ostensibly, the item asks informants simply to identify the various sources of aggression. However, the term for "angry" (*krood*) in this sentence explicitly means "angry toward other people." [11] Thus, one would expect villagers to focus on the activities or characteristics of others—or, at minimum, on some dimension of a social relationship—which elicits their ire. However, their most frequent response is to ignore the semantic pressure to refer to others and to dwell on characteristics within themselves that cause their anger. Thirty percent of

[192] [828] [11] The importance of this point becomes apparent when *krood* is contrasted with some of the other "angrys" in the Thai lexicon: *moohoo*, angry at the situation in which one is entangled rather than toward another person; *chun*, angry at the action of another person, but not the person himself, with a suggestion of helplessness (the blast of a radio as one is falling asleep); *chiw*, to *feel* angry at another person, but to conceal its expression; *moohoochunchiaw*, angry all the time, at anything, because one has a character trait to be angry; *khunkheen*, revengeful. That the villagers should have such a rich set of lexical contrasts in this area—and I have excluded terms which are simply variations on the intensity of "angry" ("irritated" *vs.* "enraged")—is not without significance. "Anger" obviously is an emotion to which villagers attend.